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ABSTRACT

The question of whether internal versus external locus of control for generalized expectancies of reinforcement is an important variable in working with college reentry students was examined in a descriptive study. Subjects were 24 women (9 Caucasians, 7 African Americans, and 8 Hispanic Americans aged 19 to 24 years) enrolled in a proprietary business career junior college in a major metropolitan area of the southern United States. The women completed the Rotter Internal External Locus of Control Scale (IE Scale) and a student survey containing questions about respondents' ethnic background, grade-point average (GPA), and 1994 income. Of the three groups, the Hispanic women had the lowest IE scores (a fact attributed to their cultural heritage, Latina achievement styles, and the strength of their familial commitments). Among the African American students, there was an aggregate of single mothers with high GPAs, extremely low income levels, and very external IE scores. Attributional retraining programs were concluded to be a viable remedial intervention for assisting at-risk college students. (The reference list and bibliography contain 63 references. Appended are the following: project-related correspondence; reentry student survey; and a table and graphs detailing responses to the survey instruments.) (MN)

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Understanding Career College Reentry Students: A Cross-Cultural Investigation of Locus of Control and Attributional Retraining

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Abstract

Focus on determining if internal versus external locus of control for generalized expectancies of reinforcement is an important variable in working with college reentry students. Descriptive information was obtained regarding the benefits to the student from participation in the attributional retraining program. The study was conducted at a proprietary business career junior college in a major metropolitan area of the southern United States. All participants were female college reentry students between the ages of nineteen (19) and twenty-four (24) years of age, with the mean age of 20.64 years. The group of participants was equally represented by Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic college reentry students.

In this descriptive study of generalized expectancies for locus of control of reinforcement in college reentry students the method of measurement was Julian Rotter's I-E Scale. The I-E Scale was selected because it deals with the participant's belief about the nature of the world and is concerned with their expectations about who controls their reinforcement. Due to the cross cultural characteristics of the study participants, it was anticipated that culturally dependent differences and similarities would be found which would have the potential for positive or negative impact on the student's educational success. Additionally, the

Reentry Student Survey was developed by the author to determine the effectiveness of components of the current attributional retraining program for reentry students at the college. Both instruments were administered in a group setting during a regularly scheduled reentry student meeting.

Historically, strong correlational relationships have been established between low socioeconomic level, low academic achievement and external locus of control. Access to the participant's files provided identification of their ethnic group, GPA, and most recently available income data, which were then associated with their I-E score. Analysis of the data was performed using descriptive statistics. However, inferential statistics were used where possible. **Statview 4.0: Abacus Concepts** software was used to calculate the statistics and to produce scattergrams of the relationships between locus of control, ethnic group, income, and GPA.

Because of the small N of the study, no significant correlations were found between ethnic group and I-E score, GPA, and I-E score, or income and I-E score. However, in the evaluation of the statistical findings, trends could clearly be seen. The Hispanic group of students had exceptionally lower I-E scores, which was attributed to their cultural heritage, Latina achievement styles, and the strength of their familial commitments. The trend among African-American students was

more "grouped" with an especially interesting aggregate of single mothers with high GPA's, extremely low income levels, and very external I-E scores. Post-research interviews occurred with the individuals in this group and a discussion is provided in the conclusion section of the paper.

Implications for attributional retraining programs were discussed and further research was encouraged. Specifically, research is encouraged in the area of Martin Seligman's Explanatory Style which concerns optimism versus pessimism. Attributional retraining programs should be considered a viable remedial intervention for assisting all at-risk college students, but especially, it can prove effective when the individual student is understood and honored. At some prior point in time, the individual made the choice of implementing their chosen generalized expectancies for reinforcement or explanatory style. Attributional retraining involves looking at those conscious choices, recognizing why they were chosen, validating their erroneousness, and utilizing the redecision process to chose a healthier way of being. Attributional retraining, encouragement, and mentoring are tools to assist individuals in achieving the goals they have set for themselves.

Introduction

Considerable research has focused on determining the variables attributing to the occurrence of dropping-out among college students. The factors include family structure and social support, lack of adjustment skills, and cognitive factors including locus of control. The present study examines these factors in the literature and determines if locus of control is a significant factor with college reentry students. Included is a review of programs and techniques which have been utilized to help students succeed after they have already demonstrated an unsuccessful college experience.

Students who have dropped out of college and reentered are likely to drop out again (Friedheim & James, 1995.) Studies have been conducted to determine the personality traits and mind sets associated with students who fail or who are at-risk of failing. One of the most successfully measured psychological constructs pertaining to student success or failure is the generalized expectancies for internal versus external locus of control of reinforcement. Determining one's locus of control is particularly valuable when it involves the attempts of people to better the

conditions of their lives, and to control their life in important life situations, such as in an educational setting (Rotter, 1966.)

The intent of this study is to gain knowledge about college reentry students. With the knowledge acquired, insight is developed and can be employed to assist the students towards obtaining their desired success. The assumption of this study is that college reentry students have an external locus of control and that their explanations for experiencing non-success are due to reasons outside of themselves. Furthermore, they have developed this belief system of expectations by generalizing the current educational experience based on the perceived outcomes and expectations from previous similar experiences. In general, college reentry students do not believe that they control their destiny, and therefore when they approach an obstacle in their path, they tend to generalize their expectancy in dealing with the obstacle, based on their previous expectation and experiences. Because of the generalized expectancy that their outcome is controlled by forces outside of themselves, they reduce their perseverance and effort levels, shut down, give-up and drop out of school. This pattern can become a reoccurring cycle of events in varying circumstances and thus serves to reinforce the individual's belief system. Through attributional retraining, the student can learn to change their

external locus of control to an internal locus of control, thereby accepting responsibility for their actions and consequences.

The study was conducted with 28 reentry students in a private business college in the southern United States.

Literature Review

Family Structure and Social Support

Timberlawn Psychiatric Research Foundation has conducted fundamental studies regarding healthy families. Middle-class white families and working-class African-American families were studied and evaluated on a continuum in regard to their relative psychological health or dysfunction. The difference in socioeconomic levels between the two ethnic groups was of interest, as was the function of race. Overall, it was found that healthy families or dysfunctional families exist regardless of race. Struggles due to low socioeconomic level, may influence the psychological health of the marital relationship which in turn effects the psychological health of the family (Lewis & Looney, 1983).

Of the multitude of college students who choose career college training over the traditional university education, many come from socioeconomically challenged backgrounds. Hence, one tends to find a higher incidence of families headed by single women in the career college setting. Studies suggest that the academic success of single-parent students is often associated with several sociological and psychological belief factors. Of these single parent families, students typically attribute their academic success to personal ambition, family support and support in the educational setting. College students surveyed indicated that effort and discipline, and accepting responsibility for their current situation were of great importance in their success. Familial emotional support, encouragement and financial support have proven to be a critical factors in their academic success. It is also recognized that being a good role model and creating greater opportunities for their children are motivating to the student who is a single parent. Support from their peers and developing a professional and personal relationship with faculty were essential contributions to their academic success. Interestingly, it was indicated that receiving additional help from faculty with their academic work was of little or no importance to their academic success. It is the personal and professional relationship with the faculty that seems to have greater influence and impact (Stone, 1994).

Achievement needs of the individual are nurtured by the socialization process in family life and are a function of attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and cultural values of the parents. Parental education level has shown to be a significant predictor of the development of perceived locus of control in the child (Hortacsu, 1993, p. 430). The mother's choice of social role, the daughter's plans and personal characteristics, the daughter's feelings towards her father, and the parent's educational and occupational levels' influence the encompassing atmosphere of the family, all contribute to a woman's need for achievement (Harris, 1993).

Adolescent females who are driven toward material gains typically had mothers who tended to value conformity more than self-direction, who had less education and a lower income, and who raised their children in low-income, high-crime neighborhoods (Kasser, 1995). African-American women and Euro-American women do not differ in their needs for achievement, over the life span. However, African-American women show more desire for traditional achievement concerns in late adolescence, which may be a function of parental occupational choices, modeling and racial oppression. Euro-American women's lower concern for traditional achievement in late adolescence may stem from the double standards

that exist for females in Euro-American culture. Euro-American women flow more towards traditional achievement roles later in life (Harris, 1993).

An adolescent with a high internal locus of control and prestigious career aspirations typically lives in a two-parent family structure. Historically, low income and single-parent family life have been associated with lower educational achievement of children in such families (McCullogh, 1994). It has been recognized that children from d vorced families worry more, have lower self-esteem, are sadder, act out more in the classroom, they have less enthusiasm, and have more bodily complaints (Seligman, 1990). Astone (1994) found that school careers of children in step families are seriously disrupted. Almost one-fourth of the children in step-families moved three or more times between the 5th and 10th grade, and one-third moved two or more times. Of children in two-parent families, only 6% moved three or more times during the five-year period. Only 12% moved two or more times. Eighteen (18) percent of the educational disadvantage that is associated with living with a single parent can be accounted for by residential mobility. Twenty-nine (29) percent of the educational disadvantage associated in living in a step-family can be accounted for by residential mobility (Astone, 1994, p. 580).

These findings demonstrate the significant influence that moving and changing schools can have in a child's educational attainment and social choices. Children who change schools often miss important educational material which in turn lowers their school performance. Children and parents who are new to the community lack in established and stable information sharing relationships. These informational relationships are vital for transmitting resource information about which schools are good, which teachers to avoid, etc. Additionally, teachers are less likely to invest in a child they do not know very well, especially if the child's record indicates that he or she moves often (Astone, 1994).

To enhance understanding and to maximize services provided, researchers, counselors and educators frequently investigate the cognitive development of the student. One of the most direct paths is through examining parenting style during their childhood. Three categories of parenting styles have been historically utilized in research on parent-child relations:

> (1) authoritarian parents, who emphasized obedience, conformity, and respect for authority, with little support or affection; (2) permissive parents, who made few demands on children, did not confront misbehavior or enforce rules, and were generally warm and accepting; and

> (3) authoritative parents, who exerted firm control in enforcing rules and responding to misbehavior, encouraged their children's individuality and open communication, and were warm and nurturant (Ginsberg , 1993, p.1462).

Parental behavior influences children's motivational orientation and academic performance. Children from both authoritarian and permissive families demonstrate less persistence, motivation and satisfaction with their schoolwork. Authoritative parents, who have an internal sense of control are apt to feel they influence their child's behavior, engage in more positive relationships and interactions with their children, and teach an internal sense of control and nurture a sense of high self-esteem in their children through modeling and through direct conversations (Ginsburg, 1993).

Parents who rate high on external locus of control may fail to teach their children the important relationship between their behavior and it's consequences. Children who believe their happiness and fate are controlled by external forces tend to rely on outside forces for judging their success or failure in school, prefer to engage in easy rather that challenging tasks, are less intrinsically motivated, work to please

the teacher and others, exhibit less interest or curiosity about schoolwork, and depend more on assistance from the teacher. It has been shown that children who have an external locus of control receive lower grades and achievement test scores (Ginsburg, 1993, p. 1472).

Lack of Social and Adjustment Skills

Loneliness is a factor that can contribute to dropping out of college. The transition from high school and home to college and college campus can be difficult for many individuals. Rotenberg (1993) found that college students with a high degree of loneliness at the beginning of the academic year are likely to drop out of their first year of college. Many college students experience intense loneliness at college because of poor social skills and they have difficulty establishing satisfactory peer relationships. Rotenberg (1993) examined both male and female first year college students and found that loneliness is an accurate predictor for dropping out. Interestingly, they found that loneliness places greater psychological adjustment demands on men than on women.

Locus of control, self-esteem and perceived distance from home as predictors of college adjustment were intricately evaluated in female college freshmen by

Mooney, Sherman, and Lo Presto (1991). The study found that college adjustment is a result of various interrelated conditions. Female students who had an internal locus of control and high level of self-esteem declared that they had a smoother adjustment to college than did female students who had either a low level of self-esteem or external locus of control. The indirect benefits of optimism, internal locus of control, and the beneficial effects of self-esteem predict less use of avoidant coping in freshman college student's adjustments to college (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992, p. 999). No significant difference was found for *actual* geographical distance between home and college, however, it was found that the student's *perception* of the distance was a key element. Those students who reported the distance from home as "just right" reported more success in adjusting to college than those students who perceived the distance as "too far."

Cognitive Factors including Locus of Control

The incidence of depression and external locus of control has been correlationally established in Anglo-American women from a low socioeconomic level. Although, when the relationship was studied for African-American women, the strong correlation which was anticipated was not found. The study, however, evaluated individuals with the diagnosis of schizophrenia or depression, and had

low self-esteem. Their locus of control was evaluated and the finding showed that a diagnosis of schizophrenia, but not depression was associated with a more external locus of control even when level of disturbance was controlled. Women with the lowest self-esteem had the most external locus of control orientation. The theory has been well supported in historical literature that the women who had negative views of themselves were not blaming themselves for the cause of their self-deprecation, but perceived the events leading towards their low self-worth as uncontrollable, which suggests feelings of helplessness and hopelessness (Goodman, 1994).

Brown and Dutton (1995) set out to empirically document the differences in emotional responses to performance outcomes and to predict why they occur and the situations in which they will occur. Self-esteem was not the influencing factor on how happy or unhappy participants felt when they succeeded or failed. However, their level of self-esteem impacted how humiliated or ashamed of themselves they felt when they failed. Feelings of self-worth were determined to be more relevant to the individual than were emotions based on the outcome of the event. The influence of emotional reactions to performance are strongest for emotions that directly implicate the self and the influence is greater following

failure than following success. Following failure, feelings of self worth rapidly decline among people with low self-esteem, but remain high among people with a high level of self-esteem.

Supportive of Rotter's (1966) generalized expectancies for external locus of control and similar to Seligman's (1990) pessimistic explanatory style, Brown and Dutton (1995) found that participants with low self-esteem rated their general intelligence and competencies more negatively after failure than after success. And high self-esteem participants tended to rate their general intelligence more positively after failure than after success. Brown and Dutton (1995) assume that people with low self-esteem have, through life experiences, come to think of themselves as somehow bad, worthless, and/or globally deficient whenever they make a mistake or fail. Insulating low self-esteem people from the pain of failure entails breaking the virtually automatic connection between failure and feelings of worthlessness. People with low self-esteem may become more concerned with protecting themselves from the pain of failure rather than risking success.

Intervention

Students attribute their successes either to their efforts and traits or they attribute

their lack of success to forces outside of themselves. Students' motivation stems from the their perceptions and beliefs about the cause for their achievement or non-achievement. These attributional beliefs will effect their motivation towards the performance of future tasks. Students who perceive that they will fail, regardless of their actions and/or efforts, are apt to reduce their attempts towards achievement. The consequences of their beliefs may range from lack of attention in the classroom, to insufficient studying, to absenteeism. Attributional retraining has proven to be a beneficial factor in instilling more adaptive attributions in individuals who have an external locus of control. When students are taught that the cause for failure is changeable and/or controllable, attributional retraining is thought to amplify their perception of control and competence, enhance their motivation, and ultimately their academic performance (Menec, 1994).

The incidence of attributional retraining in college students was studied and documented by Menec and others (1994). Students who had experienced academic failure, and had an external locus of control were shown videotapes of approximately eight minutes in length which presented a graduate student verbally recounting an incident of failure. The student strongly expressed how his failure was due to lack of effort or lack or appropriate strategies. Subsequently, the

student in the tape emphasized that since increasing the amount of effort and by changing strategies, his performance had improved. Very clearly, effort and choice of strategy were depicted as controllable. Additionally, the student in the training videotape mentioned that this was consistent with psychological research.

Following the viewing of the attributional retraining tape, participants viewed a tape of a professor's lecture. In one version of the tape, the professor exhibited expressiveness via physical movement, eye contact, voice inflection, and humor. In the alternate tape, the professor exhibited a low level of expressiveness. In post-tape viewing testing, the students who received the attributional retraining *and* viewed the tape of the expressive professor, exhibited an increase in academic achievement. Whereas, students who received attributional retraining *but* viewed the videotape of the professor with a low level of expressiveness did not exhibit a significant increase in academic achievement in the post-test. Overall, attributional retraining increased performance by approximately 10 - 14%, which might be viewed by some to be a modest gain, but in reality, may mean an increase from one letter grade to the next (Menec, 1994, p.698). This small gain may be just what the student needs in order to evade the risk of dropping out or failing.

Monetary incentive programs and token economies have proved useful as an intervention tool to motivate students to attend school and to enhance their

academic performance. A two-year controlled experiment conducted by Reid and Bailey-Dempsey (1995) yielded beneficial results. The study included adolescent females at risk of school failure. Two programs were utilized to motivate attendance and academic performance. The first program offered the students a financial incentive and the second program provided only social and educational services to the students and their families. A control group of at-risk students was utilized for comparison in the study. The findings showed that the students who received the social and educational services improved their grades slightly and maintained satisfactory attendance. Students in the control group expressed a significant decline in grades and increase in absences while students who received the financial incentive demonstrated only a slight drop in grades and maintained satisfactory attendance. The incentive program and the services program were administered for one year. In the second year of the study, the groups' performances were tracked to determine the carry-over effect of the previous year's treatments. Virtually no carry-over effect was found. The authors of the study suggested that monetary incentives and appropriate services need to be coupled in order to have an impact on school performance.

Mentoring programs have been successful in assisting at-risk students in academic achievement and attendance performance. Mentoring has also been found to aid students with an external locus of control realize they have control over their grades and attendance. Students express that they "feel better" about themselves and school due to being a recipient of mentoring (Thompson, 1991).

A creative attributional retraining program was instituted by the author which unified a token economy with mentoring and encouragement services in a group of business college reentry students. Based on historical data which identified reentry students as likely to drop out again, the opinion was that students who are in peril need more attention, not less. For the first twelve weeks upon returning to the college, reentry students were encouraged to achieve excellent attendance and academic performance through a humanistic mentoring program and a positively reinforcing token economy. The program was designed to accomplish attributional retraining by quickly assisting the reentry student in decreasing the fear of transitioning back into the educational environment, assisting the reentry student in experiencing the success of achievement, developing or enhancing a strong work ethic, and also experiencing recognition and reinforcement for

appropriate behaviors. This attributional retraining program called SUCCESS BUCKS is the basis for this study (Friedheim & James, 1995).

Reentry students in the SUCCESS BUCKS program collect tokens (pieces of colored, printed paper) based on attendance and academic achievement. Weekly meetings are held during the 15 minute morning break between classes. Attendance in the meetings in not required, but it is encouraged by the SUCCESS BUCKS facilitator. During the meeting, the SUCCESS BUCKS earned by the student during the previous week are distributed and a great amount of social recognition and praise is given to each individual student in attendance. SUCCESS BUCKS tokens can be redeemed by the student at any time for meals to local restaurants, passes to local attractions and other appealing awards. The valuable combination of the token economy (external) and social praise and recognition (internal) go hand-in-hand to assist the student in leading herself towards feeling better about herself, and towards fulfilling her achievement potential.

In addition to the SUCCESS BUCKS token economy, the SUCCESS BUCKS facilitator serves as mentor to the reentry students. This person is not in an authoritative decision-making role in the students involvement with the college.

Students are encouraged to see and talk with their mentor whenever a problem, challenge or success occurs. Through these person-centered, face-to-face meetings, information is shared regarding the student's history and current situation. Possible solutions are offered, personal empowerment is discussed, cognitive management skills (optimism) and relationship/communication skills are taught, and attributional retraining occurs.

Methodology

Population

The population of the study consists of career college reentry students.

Sample

The focus of this study is to determine if external locus of control for generalized expectancies of reinforcement is an important variable in working with college reentry students. Additionally, descriptive information was sought regarding the amount of participation in and enjoyment derived from the current reentry program at the business college. All participants were females college reentry students between the age of 19 years and 24 years, with the mean age of 20.64 years old. Nine (9) participants were Caucasian, seven (7) participants were African-

American and eight (8) participants were Hispanic. A convenience sample was used for this study because of limitations on time and money. It is the judgement of the researcher that the convenience sample is just as good as if the sample would include reentry students from various career colleges.

Study Design

The steps taken by the researcher to conduct the study are as follows:

1. Based on the expertise and professional involvement of the researcher with college reentry students, an extensive review of the literature was made.

2. The sample was identified in the educational setting of a prominent business college.

3. Based on the review of the literature, Rotter's (1966) I-E Scale (Appendix A) was selected for the measurement of generalized expectancies of locus of control.

4. The Reentry Student Survey (see Appendix B) was developed based on the expertise of the researcher. Consultation with research experts and pretesting occurred.

5. Changes were made to the survey, and again pretesting and expert consultation were conducted to verify content validity.

6. The scale and the survey were distributed during a regularly scheduled meeting of reentry students.

7. Grade Point Average (G.P.A.) and income information from 1994 were obtained from the students' files.

8. The results of the scale and survey were analyzed by the researcher. Mean ranking of the scores was utilized. Relationships between I-E Scale scores, GPA, race, and income levels were evaluated. Consultation with statistics and research experts was procured.

9. Conclusions were drawn from the data accumulated, the review of the literature, and the experience of the researcher.

Instrumentation

In this descriptive study of generalized expectancies for locus of control of reinforcement in college reentry students the method of measurement was Rotter's I-E Scale (Rotter, 1966). The I-E Scale was selected because it "deals exclusively with subject's belief about the nature of the world," and is "concerned with the subject's expectations about how reinforcement is controlled" (Rotter, 1966, p. 10). Therefore, the test is considered to be a measure of generalized expectancies of reinforcement. The scale is a self reporting, paper and pencil

instrument, which incorporates a total of 29 forced-choice statements. Six (6) of the items are fillers intended to disguise the intention of the test with the remaining 23 statements targeting locus of control within varying dimensions. When utilized with a variety of subject groups, tests for internal consistency and test-retest reliability were found to be relatively stable as outlined by Rotter (1966). Correlations with a early version of the I-E Scale and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale were obtained, changes to the scale were made and the correlation with social desirability was reduced. Low correlations with intelligence and generalized expectancies for locus of control of reinforcement were found to occur.

The Reentry Student Survey was administered to ascertain the aspects of the reentry program the students found beneficial. The Reentry Student Survey entailed 5 sections. Section one contained three (3) questions intended to verify the extent of the student's involvement in the current reentry program. Section two included six (6) questions in a 4-point Likert format intended to determine the aspects of and their degrees of the current reentry program the student found to be motivational. Section three incorporated fifteen (15) 4-point Likert format statements indicating how certain aspects of the business college effected the

student. Section four consisted of eleven (11) Semantic Differential adjective opposites to measure the strength of the student's feelings while in the classroom setting. Section five entailed two demographic questions to ascertain the student's age and graduation date. The students were instructed to remain anonymous in responding to the survey in order to promote genuineness and honesty. A case, therefore, can be made for the content validity of the instrument because it is based on the expertise of the researcher.

Both the I-E Scale and the Reentry Student Survey were administered in a group setting during a regularly scheduled reentry student meeting. Donuts and bakery items were provided for the participants in appreciation for their participation. Historically, strong correlational relationships have been established between low socioeconomic level, low academic achievement and external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Access to the participants' files provided their ethnic group, G. P. A.'s and income data for 1994. Income level, ethnic group, and G. P. A. for each participant was associated with their I-E Scale score.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was performed using descriptive statistics. However, an attempt was made to go beyond mere descriptive statistics and use inferential statistics where possible. **Statview 4.0: Abacus Concepts** software was used to calculate the statistics and to evaluate the relationships between locus of control, ethnic group, income and G.P.A.

Results

The scores of Rotter's I-E Scale are evaluated on a continuum. A total of 23 questions measure internal or external locus of control; the higher the number, the more external is the participants' score. Conversely, the lower the number, the more internal is the participant's score. The midpoint on the scale's continuum of results is 11.5. A total of twenty-eight (28) scales were distributed and twenty-four (24) were returned. The evaluation of Rotter's I-E Scale scores in this study showed a range in scores of thirteen (13), with two (2) as the lowest score (more internal), and fifteen (15) as the highest score (more external). A mean of 9.13 and a standard deviation of 3.79 were determined. The median score was 10, and the mode was 11.

Access to the participant's files provided their income for 1994 and G.P.A. (Appendix C). The mean income level is $21,478 and mean G.P.A. is 2.12. The median income is $17,550 and the median G.P.A. is 2.16. The range in income levels is $68,391 and in G.P.A., the range is 3.73 (zero is the lowest in both categories). Statistical tests found no significant relationship between I-E Score and ethnic group, I-E score and G.P.A., or I-E score and 1994 income.

Of the twenty-eight (28) surveys distributed, twenty-five (25) students completed and returned the Reentry Student Survey (Appendix B). It was found that on average, typically the student attended weekly reentry meetings 3.13 times per month. All participants reported that they participated in the SUCCESS BUCKS program, and twenty-two (22) stated that they had collected and redeemed SUCCESS BUCKS.

In ascertaining the components of the SUCCESS BUCKS program that motivated the individual students, the top three ranked items were: talking with the SUCCESS BUCKS facilitator (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.88, Strongly Agree), feeling like they are treated as someone special (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.8, Strongly Agree), and looking forward to redeeming SUCCESS BUCKS for SUCCESS BUCKS Awards (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.76, Strongly Agree)

Of the fifteen (15) items surveyed, the items that most effected the participant's role at the college were: the individual's desire to achieve their goal in earning their degree or diploma (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.96, Strongly Agree), the job placement services upon graduation (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.8, Strongly Agree), the Mentor (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.8, Strongly Agree), Individual mentor meetings (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.76, Strongly Agree), and the SUCCESS BUCKS program (on a 4-point scale: mean of 3.72, Strongly Agree). In accessing the attitude of the participants while in class, a 7-point Semantic Differential Scale with 11 pairs of adjective opposites was employed. The higher number on the scale indicates the more positive of the two word choices. The top five (5) mean ranked items were: "determined" vs. "floating": mean of 6.04, "smart" vs. "dumb": mean of 5.92, "eager" vs. "dull": mean of 5.92, "goal-oriented" vs. "floating": mean of 5.76, and "flexible" vs. "rigid": mean of 5.76. Graduation dates were requested on the Reentry Student Survey for identification purposes if desired at a later date. No analysis was made of this data. Of the twenty-five (25) participants, the mean age was 20.64 with a range of 5 years.

Conclusion

Based on this sample's data, this researcher concludes that there seems to be trends among locus of control and G.P.A. and locus of control and income in certain individuals. Individuals from lower socioeconomic status and African-American individuals have frequently been theorized to have an external locus of control in response to poverty, and actual or longitudinal discrimination. The correlation between external locus of control and minority status has been supported in many different studies, even when there is a control factor for race (Goodman, 1994, p. 261). This study examines these previous findings.

It is believed that because of the small sample size no significant relationship was found between ethnic group and I-E score, G.P.A. and I-E score or income and I-E score. However, in looking at the scattergrams (Appendix D & Appendix E), the initial stages of trends can be seen. The scattergram in Appendix F attempts to correlate Race (Ethnic Group) with I-E score. All of the scores of the seven (7) African-American participants were eight (8) to fourteen (14). The trend here is the lack of low scores and the consistency in higher (external) scores. The Caucasian participant's scores have the greatest variance and range between 2 (very internal) to 15 (external). No significant clusters can be seen and the trend seems to be the wide variance. The Hispanic participant's score were in general

lower than either the African-American's or Caucasian's scores. Four (4) out of seven (7) Hispanic students had an I-E score of five (5) or below.

Latinas frequently must utilize an achievement style which is socially oriented and emphasizes the use of networks to achieve goals. Latino culture's social norms for women emphasizes reciprocity in achieving. This reciprocity includes components of contributing to the achievement of others and reciprocally entrusting their achievement to others. Furthermore, those individuals who are bicultural (Latino - Anglo-American), because of their acculturation or assimilation, have a wider variety of achievement behaviors. With a double-minority status, Hispanic females might feel additional pressure to prove themselves and to contribute to the universal achievement of both minority groups to which they belong. This drive might be subsequently supported by the attitude that any departure from excellence may be attributed by others or the self, as a function of their gender or ethnicity (Gomez, 1994). Mexican-American females have been found to have lower delinquency rates that Caucasian non-Hispanic females (Chavez, 1994). When a Latina student fails, it is not necessarily an individual failure, but it is a failure of sociocultural expectations, and the historical lack of acceptance by the Anglo culture of her Hispanic educational and cultural heritage. The longitudinal impact

of Anglo-American non-acceptance of Hispanic culture may have a deepened influence on a Latina individual's expectations of her achievement (Ronda, 1994).

None of the Hispanic student's score were as high as the highest score in the other two ethnic groups. It the author's opinion, based on literature read and hundreds of discussions with Hispanic students, this trend towards internality is due to the strength of the Hispanic family. Family members are assigned and play-out traditional roles based on gender, birth order and personal traits. Each family member makes life-long committments to the family unit and to it's individual members. Responsibilities are given and the circle of family relationships is established and honored. It is this committed familial circle that supports the individual through out her life.

The Hispanic woman's role also includes being submissive to men, being modest and shy, taking care of the children and the household and feeling happy doing it. However, the Hispanic woman in North American society feels the desire to develop a career outside of the home and often times, has the financial need to do so. Whether she is married or still with her parents, she must wrestle with learning to accomplish both roles: committment to her family and her cultural traditions,

and transitioning into the career lifestyle. It is a delicate and often times precarious passage for her. Many Latinas have been raised "to focus on what she perceived as her faults and minimize her professionmal strengths, intellectual capacities and career ambitions...." (Gil and Vasquez, 1996, p.103). Attributional retraining should be considered a viable remedial intervention for assisting all at-risk college students, but especially, it can prove to be effective with Latinas when her heritage is honored, and her self-determination is respected.

Upon further examination of the trends in African-American I-E scores, income and G.P.A., an interesting cluster can be seen (Appendix C) among participants 22, 23, and 24 (nominally labeled to respect and protect their anonymity). These three (3) participants all had extremely low 1994 income, relatively high external I-E scores and respectably high G.P.A. From the author's previous conversations with these three (3) students, they are all single mothers, and have come to the metropolitan-based career college from smaller towns in the state. Each of the young women seem to have a bright attitude the majority of the time, and are competitive. They have admitted they are driven to succeed by the lack of returning to a viable alternative and that they are capable of creating a different life for themselves than what they had prior to coming to the college. They do not

seem to get beaten down by the obstacles in their lives, but keep urging upward. A goal of having a more prosperous monetary and material lifestyle, being able to provide well for their children and enjoy time with their children keeps them focused on their goal.

Others have found poor single-mother college students to believe that "their success in college was 'critical to their child's social and intellectual development" (Stone, 1994, p. 577). Rotter (1966) commented on findings that there are at times a significant relationship between intelligence and external which implies that the individual's perception of limited material opportunities and of powerful external forces (i.e.: poverty, oppression, discrimination) generate the external attitude (Rotter, 1966, p. 24). Looking at the second scattergram (Appendix E), a trend can be seen developing towards higher G.P.A. and higher (external) I-E scores. Some may develop an external view as a defense mechanism against failure or lack of foreseen opportunity (Rotter, 1966, p. 21). It is the author's opinion that the external socioeconomic pressures cause these three single-mothers to have an external score. Not only do they daily deal with the external pressures of economic survival, but they are motivated by them to continue ameliorating their lifestyles. Additional research of the relationship between poor single-mother

college students' locus of control, income, ethnic group and G.P.A. would certainly provide helpful data and insight.

Further research that may prove valuable is in the area of optimistic and pessimistic explanatory style of college reentry students. Explanatory style is a similar psychological construct when compared to generalized expectancies for internal versus external locus of control of reinforcement. Explanatory style addresses a person's beliefs about why events occur, or their beliefs about what will occur in the next similar situation. Examining an individual's explanatory style will yield additional information about the person's belief patterns in personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness of events, their outcomes and impact. Seligman's (1990) assertions concur with Rotter's (1966) that a pessimistic explanatory style is learned in childhood from the reality of the child's life circumstances, be it poverty, racial oppression, overbearing parents, siblings or teachers. And thereafter, the individual imposes their learned pessimism on every new crisis and obstacle. This repeated exposure to pessimistic thoughts can lead to feeling bad, deficiencies in the ability to concentrate, distortions in perception in relationships, insomnia, lethargy, immobilization and lack of motivation, learned helplessness and depression.

Most depressed people are found to be pessimists and are accurate judges of how much control they really have. Non-depressed people, or optimists, believe they have much more control over occurances than they really do, particularly when they are helpless and have no control at all (Seligman, 1990, p. 109). At this point for the optimist, determination comes to the forefront to motivate the student in persevering. However, the pessimist becomes overwhelmed in the downward spiral of negative and painful thoughts which, as previously stated, frequently leads to immobilization and depression.

Studies have shown that women perceive setting high expectations for themselves to be outside their feminine role. Therefore, they may set lower goals than they actually desire to achieve (Heatherington, 1993, p. 751). As is also with the psychological constructs of locus of control and explanatory style, this expression of female modesty often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (King, 1992, p 98-99). For many reentry students, incompleteness, failure, low self expectations and underachievement have created a pattern woven throughout their lives. Recognizing the pattern is a call to make a lifestyle change (Seligman, 1993, p. 243). The future is not determined by what has occurred previously. But when the student gains the knowledge that she has the freedom to change the pattern of

her life, she can then go on to greater self-awareness and move towards achieving her potential. Assisting her in obtaining the insight and courage towards achieving her potential is the goal of this study and the interventions that will be implemented as the result.

It is the opinion of the researcher that generalized expectancies of internal versus external locus of control of reinforcement and optimistic or pessimistic explanatory style are enacted as a chosen response pattern. At some point in the individual's life, they make a conscious choice in their belief system towards leaning one way or the other. Attributional retraining involves looking at those conscious choices, recognizing why they were chosen, validating their erroneousness, and utilizing the redecision process to choose a healthier way of being. Attributional retraining, encouragement, and mentoring are tools to assist the individual achieve the goals she has set for herself.

Limitations

The results of this study are limited by convenience sampling which generated a small N=25. Even though the sampling was from the local population composed of predominantly females, and the sample of the study was totally female, it is the

opinion of the researcher that the data acquired indicates a need for a greater random sample to be obtained. A greater sample can be acquired by obtaining the same data from reentry students as they enter and proceed through the reentry program. This type of sampling over time would yield a larger N which may be informative in establishing trends and correlations, thereby greatly enhancing intervention techniques.

Other limitations in the study include the potentiality of bias created by the SUCCESS BUCKS facilitator also acting in the role of researcher. The 1994 Income information was gathered from the students' financial aid applications. Due to the guidelines put forth by the federal government for determining an individual's eligibility for federal financial aid, the income data may not present and accurate snapshot of the economic influences on the individual. Some of the income information included the parent's income and the students, some only the student's income, and some only the parent's. Lastly, in reporting the G.P.A.'s, some of the students have been "reentered" more than one grading period, and thus, their G.P.A.'s accurately represent their current status. Other students (marked by * in Appendix C), have not yet completed a full grading period since reentry. Thus, their G.P.A.'s represent their status prior to reentry.

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Appendix A

UNIVERSITY OF
CONNECTICUT

THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES
Department of Psychology

April 24, 1996

Lynne James
4923 Willowhaven Circle
Garland, TX 75043

FAX: 214-369-2631

Dear Ms. James:

You have my permission to use and reproduce the I-E Scale for your master's thesis research.

Very truly yours,

Julian B. Rotter
Professor of Psychology

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406 Babbidge Road, U-20, Storrs, Connecticut 06269-1020 (860) 486-3515 Fax: (860) 486-2760

Appendix B

REENTRY STUDENT SURVEY

The purpose of the survey is to assist other students. It will be greatly appreciated if you will answer all the questions. There is no need to sign your name: the survey is totally anonymous.

1. On average, have you attended re-entry meetings... (Check one)
- ❑ 4 times a month?
- ❑ 3 times a month?
- ❑ 2 times a month?
- ❑ One or none?

2. Have you participated in the SUCCESS BUCKS program? _____yes _____no

3. Have you collected and redeemed SUCCESS BUCKS? _____yes _____no

Which aspects of the SUCCESS BUCKS program has motivated you most?
(Circle the number that best describes your feeling)

4. The recognition I receive for my excellent performance in the weekly re-entry meetings is important to me.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

5. I enjoy collecting and counting my SUCCESS BUCKS.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

6. I look forward to redeeming my SUCCESS BUCKS for SUCCESS BUCKS Awards.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

7. I feel like I'm treated as someone special.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

8. I enjoy talking with the SUCCESS BUCKS FACILITATOR (Ms. James).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

9. I like being friends or friendly with the other Re-entry students.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
4	3	2	1

Mark the following topics to indicate how the item has effected your role at ESS:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. Part-time job leads	4	3	2	1
11. Tutoring	4	3	2	1
12. Student Activities	4	3	2	1
13. Shortened class schedule	4	3	2	1
14. Group Mentor Meetings	4	3	2	1
15. Individual Mentor Meetings	4	3	2	1
16. Mentor	4	3	2	1
17. SUCCESS BUCKS Program	4	3	2	1
18. Availability of student housing	4	3	2	1
19. Reliable transportation	4	3	2	1
20. Reliable child care	4	3	2	1
21. ESS's excellent reputation	4	3	2	1
22. I want to achieve my goal of earning my degree or diploma	4	3	2	1
23. Job placement services when I graduate	4	3	2	1
24. ESS faculty	4	3	2	1
25. My family's emotional support	4	3	2	1

Read each of the following word pairs. Think about how each word describes how you feel while you are in class. Determine the point on each line that best indicates your feeling.
Place a check mark in the space that best indicates your feeling. Make only one mark for each word pair.

Example: Happy ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Sad

26. Eager ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Dull

27. Mentally occupied ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Good listener

28. Goal-oriented ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Floating

29. Rigid ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Flexible

30. Optimist ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Pessimist

31. Lazy ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Ambitious

32. Cheerful ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Gloomy

33. Reserved ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Confident

34. Patient ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Anxious

35. Dumb ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Smart

36. Determined ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ Floating

37. When do you intend to graduate?_____

38. Your present age_____

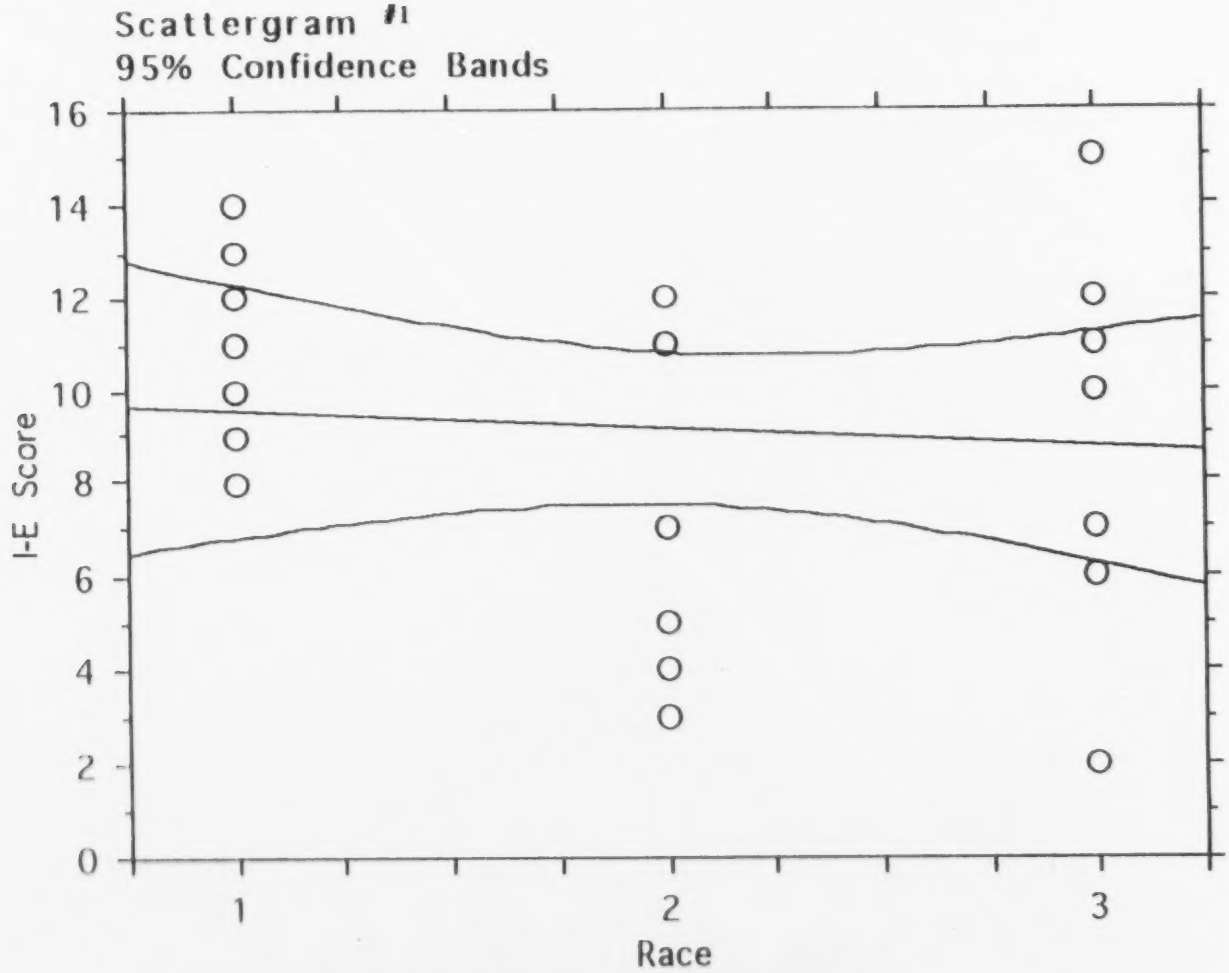
Appendix C

Subject	Ethnic Group	I-E Score	Current G.P.A.	1994 Income
1	African American	9	2.51*	$23,342
2	Caucasian	11	3.32*	$18,893
3	Hispanic	3	2.69	$59,053
4	African American	10	1.65	$50,384
5	Caucasian	2	3.73	$25,890
6	Hispanic	12	2.49	$42,508
7	Caucasian	15	3.54	$22,462
8	Caucasian	6	1.72*	$68,491
9	Caucasian	7	2.65*	$32,548
10	Caucasian	12	2.64	$7097
11	Caucasian	10	2.18	$3204
12	African American	8	1.76*	$8641
13	Hispanic	5	2.14	$22,850
14	Caucasian	15	2.01*	$3,000
15	Caucasian	11	0*	$58,608
16	Hispanic	11	1.18*	$5,000
17	Hispanic	7	1.08*	$16,208
18	African American	11	1.02*	$6,000
19	Hispanic	4	1.06*	$2,927
20	Hispanic	4	.59*	$29,274
21	Hispanic	7	1.63	$4,897
22	African American	12	3.21	$2,209

Subject	Ethnic Group	I-E Score	Current G.P.A.	1994 Income
23	African American	14	2.99	$2,009
24	African American	13	3.15	0
MEAN:		**9.13**	**2.12**	**$21,478**
S.D.		**3.79**	**.981**	**$20,758**
Median:		**10**	**2.16**	**$17,550**
Mode:		**11**	**------**	**------**
Range:		**13**	**3.73**	**$68,391**

* Student has not yet completed a grading period since reentry.

Appendix D



I-E Score = 9.947 - .395 * Race; R^2 = .007

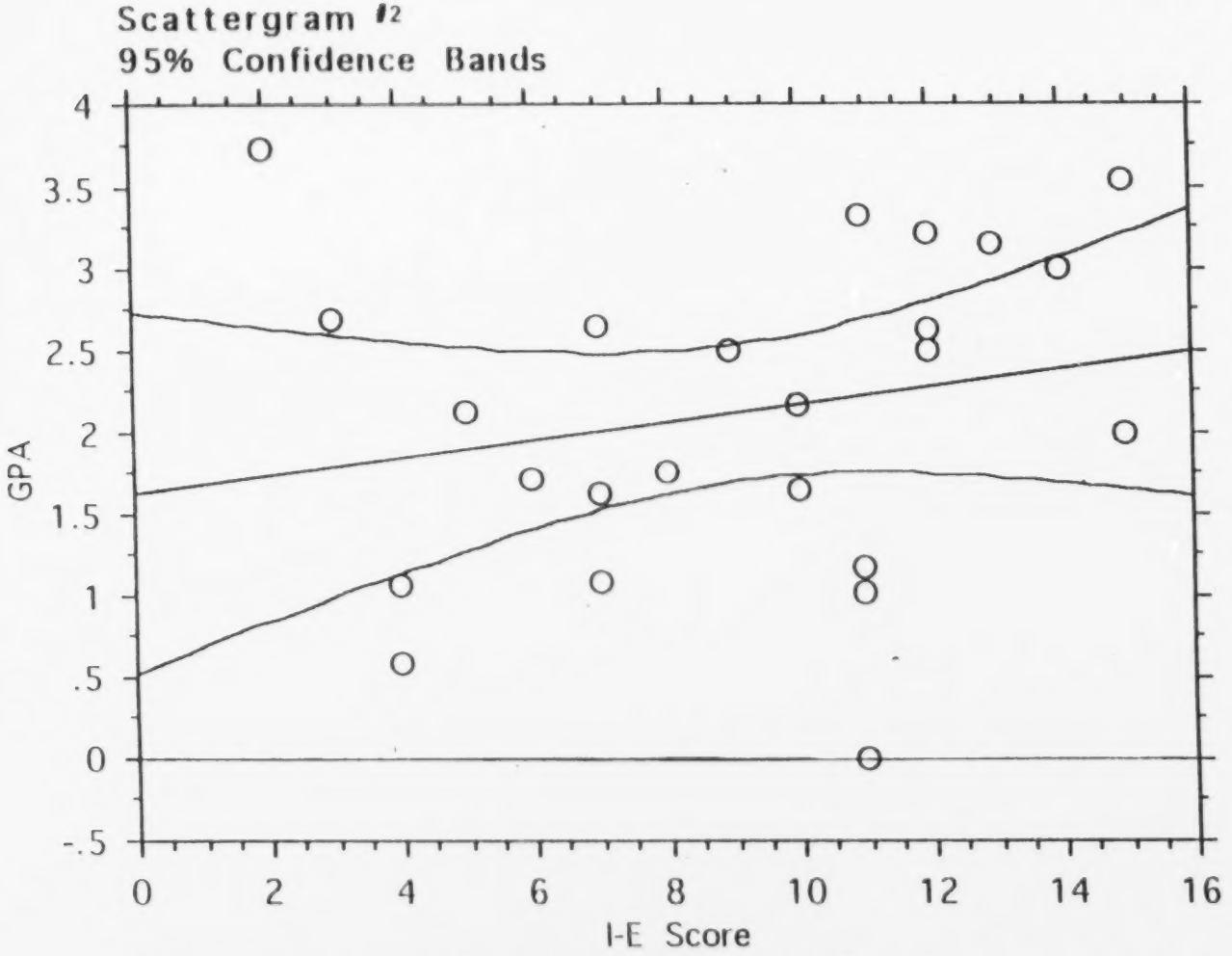
KEY:

1 = AFRICAN AMERICAN

2 = HISPANIC

3 = CAUCASIAN

Appendix E



GPA = 1.635 + .053 * I-E Score; R^2 = .043

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